

Serial Nr.: 09/924,916
Art Unit: 2112

UPA-01188

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-2, 3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite, claims 1 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Hartung, claims 2 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hartung in view of industry standard response format and evidenced by Lin, and claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hartung in view of industry standard response format and evidenced by Estakhri.

Claim 1 is now amended to correct the indefiniteness and particularly point out and claim the subject matter of this invention. In particular, claim 1 now includes the limitation that at least a program code is provided to the IDE hard disk drive controller to respond to the ATA interface with a virtual storage device having data for all sectors other than sector 0 when there is no real storage device connected to the IDE HDD controller via the ATA interface, or to disable response of the virtual storage device to the ATA interface if a real storage device is connected. The limitation is not taught or anticipated by the prior arts cited in the office action.

Hartung et al. teach an interface apparatus (nest) to isolate an IDE device from the active IDE bus until initialization of the IDE device so that the connection of the IDE device will not corrupt the IDE bus. A nest driver is executed for computer systems to determine if a nest is connected to the host, if an IDE device has been inserted in the nest and when the IDE device in the nest has been initialized. As disclosed in Hartung et al., the interface apparatus relies on a non-standard device driver in the operating system of

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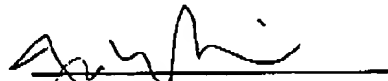
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the computer to function properly. The requirement of a non-standard device driver is the drawback of the conventional art that the instant invention tries to overcome.

The hot-swap device of the instant invention comprises an IDE hard disk drive controller which is built in with special hardware and program to respond to a standard device driver with either a virtual storage device when there is no real storage device is connected or to allow a real storage device to respond directly when there is one connected. By means of the special hardware and program, no non-standard device driver is required in the operating system. It is clear that the instant invention as claimed in the amended claim 1 is neither taught nor suggested by Hartung et al. and should be allowable. By virtue of dependency, the amended claims 2-4 should also be allowable. Claim 5 is cancelled.

From the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the instant invention differs from the cited prior arts. The physical difference results in different effects and is not obvious. The specification has been amended to correct a few editorial and grammatical errors. Claims 1-4 are submitted for allowance. Prompt and favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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